

Media release

31 March 2014

Growing your own a popular pastime for Australian households

Grow your own: the potential value and impacts of residential and community gardening will be launched today at 10.30am by Gardening Australia's Costa Georgiadis at the Wayside Chapel in Sydney.

The Australia Institute paper, by Poppy Wise, reveals two out of three households support more locally produced food via community gardens, school gardens, and in aged care facilities.

The federal government recently axed the \$1.5 billion Community Food Grants program.

The paper finds that more than half of all Australian households are growing some of their own food, either at home or at a community garden, and a further 13 per cent report they intend to start. Health, taste and cost savings are the greatest drivers for households to grow their own food.

The paper also finds that Australian households could save \$657 million a year and two million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions if more people grew their own food and decreased waste.

South Australian (59%), Tasmanian (59%) and Victorian (57%) households are most likely to be growing some of their own food, while those in the Northern Territory are the least likely to be involved in food gardening (20%).

"Our survey found that food gardening influences behaviours in relation to food waste and locally produced food items. Nearly half of all food gardening households strongly agreed that growing their own food has encouraged them to waste less food, use most of their food scraps in their garden and be more inclined to buy locally produced food," Ms Wise said.

"In addition to minimising transport emissions, local food production builds food system resilience by shortening food supply chains that can be vulnerable to disruptions such as extreme weather events and transport failures."

"The globalisation and commodification of food has gone to such an extreme that people are concerned because they're seeing what's going on," Mr Georgiadis said.

"This was backed-up by the findings of our survey with one in two strongly agreeing that they are concerned about food security," Ms Wise said.

Grow your own will be launched today at 10.30am, Rooftop Garden, Wayside Chapel, 29 Hughes Street, Kings Cross.

A copy of Grow your own is available to download from www.tai.org.au

For media enquiries, please contact:

Serena Rogers on 0421 759 262